

# Plans unveiled for Grand Avenue widening

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Joan Read, who drives to work in Peoria, clamors for relief on Grand Avenue.

"It's very congested, especially at rush hour, " said the Sun City West resident. Read and a handful of residents attended a public presentation Wednesday in Peoria on plans to widen Grand Avenue between 83rd and 99th avenues.

The \$10 million project calls for adding an additional lane in either direction for a six-lane roadway. The Arizona Department of Transportation expects construction to begin next fall and finish in late summer 2009.

The project includes dual left-turn lanes for eastbound Grand to northbound 91st Avenue and a new right-turn lane for westbound Grand to northbound 91st Avenue.

"It's going to be a big improvement," Read said. "There is a need for more access to the (Loop) 101."

ADOT project manager Michael Delleo said if nothing happens the level of service on Grand Avenue would deteriorate.

This is especially true because of the West Valley's explosive growth, said ADOT spokesman Tim Tait.

"Grand Avenue is a busy arterial and will get more busy as communities grow," he said.

Daily car trips for a typical workday number 36,000 on Grand Avenue in the project area and are expected to increase to 57,000 daily trips by 2030, said Bill Dehn, vice president with URS Corp., an ADOT contractor.

"It's a vital link here in the Valley," Dehn said. "It provides connectivity from downtown to the Northwest Valley."

Grand Avenue also serves as a route to Wickenburg and Las Vegas, he added.

"This is sort of the start of a larger, comprehensive widening of Grand Avenue," Tait said. "Grand Avenue in the Northwest Valley will see significant improvements over the next several years."

Future components of the Grand Avenue project include widening the road to six lanes from 99th Avenue to Loop 303 and installing improvements for better traffic flow and safety on Grand from Loop 101 to Van Buren Street.

The project is part of the \$15.8 billion Regional Transportation Plan developed by the Maricopa Association of Governments. Voters in 2004 approved extending a half-cent sales tax to fund the plan.

The first phase, which encompasses 1.8 miles, is considered a routine project with minimal disruption, Tait said.

"It's a good project," he said. "It's adding capacity and for not a lot of pain.

"The Northwest Valley has been expecting this."